

OPEN SECRETS OF THE HILL

STILL, HE'S A SMOOTHIE

Daschle's jibe at traveling president wasn't the first time

When Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) issued an untimely criticism of President Bush while the latter was in Europe last month, Republicans were quick to accuse him of violating the unspoken rule that politics stops at the water's edge.

But it wasn't the first time Daschle has gotten into hot water for criticizing a president when he was out of the country. That happened four years ago in the very same forum, a breakfast interview hosted by Godfrey Sperling of the Christian Science Monitor.

Daschle, then the minority leader, had to backtrack the day after the Nov. 25, 1996, session when The Washington Post reported that he planned to distance himself on a number of key issues from President Clinton, who was on his way back from a two-week trip through the Pacific.

Despite the Republican outcry for his criticism of Bush, Daschle has apparently learned how to impress the journalists.

Asked afterward if he regards Daschle as presidential timber, conservative pundit Fred Barnes of The Weekly Standard replied, "Absolutely. He's got a great manner and he's good on TV too."

Said liberal pundit Mark Shields, "He was smooth, in the sense that he was self-possessed and unruffled, not in the sense of being slick or slippery. He displays enormous confidence and it's very, very appealing."

WEYANT'S WORLD



CHRIS WEYANT

JUST IN CASE ...

Author has divorce tips for Rep. Condit

At least one enterprising author has figured out how to cash in on the troubles of Rep. Gary Condit (D-Calif.).

"It may be premature, but I've sent a copy of our Divorce Common Sense Handbook: 180+ Things Not To Do Before Your Divorce to Congressman Condit," writes Judy Colbert of Crofton, Md., in promoting her 1999 book.

Among the things she advises Condit to do, should his marriage be legally dissolved:

- Find a good family practice attorney — you can't use anyone involved in the Chandra Levy investigation;
- If you should find a box of cash stashed in your spouse's closet or in a safe deposit box, take at least half of it and deposit it in your separate account; and
- Check the California unclaimed property office for refunds, bank accounts, etc. There

FREQUENT FLIER FLAP

"It's a stealth effort to get a federal employee perk sneak attack through the House, and it worked."

— Gary Ruskin, director of the Congressional Accountability Project, after the House approved a bill allowing federal workers to keep the frequent flier miles they get while traveling on government business.

AT U. OF MD.

You can call him Professor Dave Broder

At 71, David Broder of *The Washington Post* could be excused for thinking about slowing down, but he's doing just the opposite by taking on another job.

Broder, considered the dean of the Washington press corps, will teach a weekly class in — what else? — political reporting at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism in September.

He'll spend the rest of the week writing his column and reporting on politics and government, as he has since 1966, although he'll shift from daily reporting to contributing to long-term projects like election reform and voter surveys.

WILD TIMES

Wolf welcomed by Rep. Simpson

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) will soon welcome one of the oddest additions to a congressional office to be seen in recent times. Last week he proudly told *The Hill* that he would soon be bringing a 120-pound stuffed wolf into his personal office to be mounted on the wall.

"I want a wolf," said Simpson. "I want some wildlife in my office."

Simpson, a two-term happily married lawmaker, clarified that the

are almost 100 records of unclaimed property in the Condit name, including several in Modesto.

As for things Condit should not do: "Let the lawyer advise you, but remember not to do anything that you wouldn't want to read about in the morning paper."

IN PERFECT FORM

Rep. Honda performs at karaoke bar

Anyone who wants to know where freshman Rep. Mike Honda (D-Calif.) left his heart need look no further than San Francisco.

That was the message from Honda, who hails from San Jose, last Wednesday at Café Japone, a DuPont Circle karaoke bar.

Honda, who takes his staff out regularly to sing karaoke, delivered his notes in perfect form as he sang "I Left My Heart in San Francisco."

He also encouraged a reporter who was struggling to get through "I Will Remember You" by Sarah McLachlan.

Maybe next up from Honda: "California Dreamin'"? Or "I Left My Heart in San Jose"?

CELLULAR CRISIS

Cell phone etiquette tested by Rep. Thomas at White House

Even though President Bush has made clear his distaste for the ubiquitous use of cell phones, apparently some members of Congress think they are exempt from the rule.

House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-Calif.) not only left his cell phone on during a meeting with Vice President Dick Cheney and members of the Western Caucus last week, but took a call.

married lawmaker, claimed that the wolf was the only "wild life" he wanted.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE **Bennett's interns muscle in**

On July Fourth, Barbara Arlen, a high school math teacher in suburban Maryland, and her husband Steve, an intermediate school principal, arrived at the Mall in mid-afternoon, hoping to get a good view of the fireworks. As the couple and their friends sat down on the lawn, a young woman who identified herself as an aide to Sen. Robert Bennett (R-Utah) said the area had been reserved for the senator's group.

"You can't reserve grass," Arlen replied.

The staffer, an intern, returned with another intern, who repeated the injunction. Arlen was unmoved.

The two said they would return with a police officer, but were not seen again.

Finally, a young woman staffer went to the Arlens, apologized, and assured them that Sen. Bennett had nothing to do with efforts to dislodge them.

Chief of Staff Chip Yost apologized and chastised the interns.

Sitting a few feet away from the veep, Thomas spoke on the phone, then got up and left the meeting and returned a few minutes later. Others meeting participants said Thomas also checked his messages on his phone during the meeting.

Cheney appears to have more patience with cell phones than Bush, who has publicly admonished reporters whose phones rang while he was talking. Cheney said nothing to Thomas about the incident, at least in public.

Maybe he called Thomas on his cell phone.

Melanie Fonder, Mary Lynn F. Jones, Noelle Straub and Betsy Rothstein contributed to this page.

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